

is that Democrats in Washington will not let us use it. The problem is that even with gas prices on the rise, they want to tax it even more.

Let's make this simple. I am going to propose just two concrete practical things we can do in Washington to give the American people some relief, create jobs, and help us be less dependent on foreign sources of oil, two ideas that would have wide bipartisan support. Let's increase American energy production, and let's block any new regulations that will drive up the production costs for energy. These are two ideas that will create jobs and alleviate the increasing pressure on gas prices.

Let's leave the ideology aside and do some practical good for Americans who are struggling out there. Let's increase American production of energy with American jobs and stop the job-stifling regulations.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, we are all facing the challenge of gasoline prices adding a new burden to family budgeting as well as small businesses and large businesses alike. It couldn't come at a worse time, in light of our recession and unemployment. But it is important for us to put into perspective where we are and how we should resolve this issue.

When we look at the entire known reserves of oil and gas in the world—in the entire world—the United States has 3 percent—3 percent—and each year the United States consumes 25 percent of the energy that is used in the world. So when I hear my colleagues on the other side come to the floor and say we can drill our way out of this, I say to them: That is unrealistic and doesn't reflect the reality of what we face today.

Yes, we should have responsible drilling for oil and gas. We should be sensitive to the environment to avoid the kind of hazards and accidents we saw in the Gulf of Mexico, to protect that part of America and part of the world we believe should be preserved for future generations. But the notion if we could start drilling more our problems would go away is not only naive, it is wrong—flatout wrong.

We heard the chants of “drill, baby, drill” a year and a half ago in the course of a Presidential campaign. It is not the answer to America's energy policy, ever. We still import \$1 billion worth of oil a day into the United States. It is an indication of our dependence on foreign oil that any inter-

ruption in the Middle East or from other sources is going to raise our prices.

What should we do about it? Several things. First, on the immediate agenda, we should look at the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The President has to decide—and said Friday he was considering—on releasing oil we have saved in this reserve to bring down prices and keep the economy moving forward. I support that. I hope the President will do that.

Secondly, we have to look at ways that the current oil pricing is being gamed by some financiers and speculators. From my point of view, this is something that needs to be not only examined but stopped. This speculation in oil prices runs up prices way too high, way too fast.

Third, take a look at the oil companies themselves. The top five oil companies are extremely profitable and, in the midst of crises, they make even more money. That is the reality.

Then, we need to step back and look at our national energy policy. How do we encourage the use of more efficient cars and trucks? Well, we don't do it by entertaining the amendment by the Republican leader in the Senate. He says the Environmental Protection Agency should step back from even encouraging the kind of fuel efficiency in cars and trucks which reduce our dependence on foreign oil and reduce pollution in the atmosphere. That is a step backward to the past. It is a rejection of basic science.

So when the Republican leader comes to the floor and gives his prescription for today's energy challenge in America, I would say to him: The patient is not going to get well. Senator, with your prescription. We have to have a coordinated energy policy moving toward fuel efficiency, reducing the use of energy, and still fueling our economy with renewable and sustainable sources of energy that don't pollute the atmosphere.

The Senator from Kentucky, who was giving us a speech this morning about energy, actually has an amendment he is preparing for the floor which removes the right of the Environmental Protection Agency to even deal with greenhouse gas emissions as they affect climate change and the world we live in. That is a stick-your-head-in-the-sand approach to an issue which future generations will look back on and say: What were they thinking; that they would ignore the reality of climate change in the world and the reality of what pollution is doing to our lungs, our health, our future. It is a reality that is being rejected by the Republican side of the aisle.

Madam President, I ask how much time is remaining in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Four minutes on the majority side.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chair.

ANNIVERSARY OF HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this is the 1-year anniversary of the President's signing of health care reform, and I am happy to stand and say it represents one of the most important pieces of legislation in decades. For too long, we let our Nation's health care crisis grow and ignored it. People who said let the market work its will, have to be honest about what the market did. The market started excluding people who had preexisting conditions—and who among us doesn't? The market started charging higher and higher prices for health insurance. The market, unfortunately, was uncontrollable.

We tried to deal with it, to bring pricing under control and deal with the realities families face across America. When I was in the most heated debate about the health care bill with tea party devotees in front of my office in Springfield, I told them: Let me tell you about some of the people in Illinois I have met. At some point, the tea party people said: Stop telling stories, DURBIN. We don't want to hear any more stories. Of course, they don't because those stories are the reason we did this. Those stories represent real lives.

Let me tell one of those stories, representing a family who comes from East Peoria, IL. This is Jill and Ric Lathrop. They have two sons, Sam and Nat. One of them has a Superman t-shirt on. They are 12 and 14 years old and they have severe hemophilia. It is a rare and costly medical condition.

Thanks to the twice-weekly injections of blood clotting replacement factor they receive, the boys are able to live happy and healthy lives—and they look pretty darn good in that picture. That lifesaving medication costs roughly \$250,000 per child, per year.

For years, the family has lived in fear they would reach the lifetime limit of their insurance plan. That was a reality. Many of these plans had a ceiling that paid no more beyond a certain amount. Well, it happened to them in 2005. The hospital where Ric works as an MRI technician instituted a \$2 million lifetime cap on benefits. For most families, that wouldn't even be an issue, but for the Lathrops, who know their annual medical expenses will always total hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep their boys alive, that was devastating.

Rather than waiting for their benefits to run out, the Lathrops moved to Peoria, where Ric found a job that provided insurance without lifetime limits. He moved his family and found a job to get an insurance policy that would keep their boys alive. When the open enrollment period for their health insurance plan rolled around, they waited on edge to see if their insurance would, once again, institute an annual or lifetime limit on care that would force them to move again to ensure adequate coverage for their sons.

Thanks to the bill we passed last year, insurance companies can no